Why are you here?
“A fish rots from the head!”
(Farragher, 2005)
Dual Roles
What are the Staff, Supervisor, and Administrator Challenges in Wayne County’s Community Mental Health System that affect people personally and the quality of services? (ex. Idaho)
• The Passion to do this work began it all!
• First Year: Energy, Idealism, Passion
• Second Year: Reality Hits

Recognizing
Limitations
• Fifth Year: Exhaustion, Frustration, Decision Time
If we know this process what do we do about it as supervisors and administrators.
• Current Year: Today

You’re Still Here!

So where are you at with your energy, idealism, passion? ?
Ever have a moment, a day, a week when you wondered if what you are doing really matters?
“My question is: Are we making an impact?”
Ever wonder what this work is doing to you?
LASSIE!
GET HELP!!
Exercise
Secondary Trauma/Compassion Fatigue

• “The natural and consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a painful event from a significant other, the stress from helping or wanting to help a stressed person especially a child.” (Figley, 1995; Henry, 2012)
## Impact of STS on Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive effects</th>
<th>Social impact</th>
<th>Emotional impact</th>
<th>Physical impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Negative bias, pessimism</td>
<td>• Reduction in collaboration</td>
<td>• Helplessness</td>
<td>• Headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All-or-nothing thinking</td>
<td>• Withdrawal and loss of social support</td>
<td>• Hopelessness</td>
<td>• Tense muscles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Loss of perspective and critical thinking skills</td>
<td>• Factionalism</td>
<td>• Feeling overwhelmed</td>
<td>• Stomachaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Threat focus – see clients, peers, supervisor as enemy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fatigue/sleep difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decreased self-monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Impacts

- **Cognitive effects**
  - Negative bias, pessimism
  - All-or-nothing thinking
  - Loss of perspective and critical thinking skills
  - Threat focus – see clients, peers, supervisor as enemy
  - Decreased self-monitoring

- **Social impact**
  - Reduction in collaboration
  - Withdrawal and loss of social support
  - Factionalism

- **Emotional impact**
  - Helplessness
  - Hopelessness
  - Feeling overwhelmed

- **Physical impact**
  - Headaches
  - Tense muscles
  - Stomachaches
  - Fatigue/sleep difficulties
Agency Symptoms of STS

• 86% reported signs of STS among their staff or colleagues
  – Pessimism/Negativism about patients/clients (63%)
  – Pessimism/Negativism about coworkers (63%)
  – Avoidance of certain patients/clients/families (40%)
  – Concentration/attention problems (39%)
  – Decreased collaboration (38%)
  – Excessive absenteeism (18%)
How come environment becomes so toxic?

a. What else should be expected given the painful work that we do. Our anger has to go somewhere.

b. Toxicity results from unaddressed and unresolved pain in staff.

c. We absorb the toxicity of our clients and it shifts us from being positive to be negative.

d. It is much easier to blame others than change ourselves.
The Need for Self Reflection begins with what is happening in our brain
From simple to complex:
Hierarchy of brain function

Brainstem
Diencephalon
Limbic
Neocortex

Abstract Thought
Concrete Thought
Affiliation w/ mate
Attachment
Sexual Behavior
Emotional Reactivity
Motor Regulation
Arousal
Appetite / Satiety
Sleep
BP / Heart Rate
Respiratory Drive
Body Temperature

All sensory input enters here

Perry 2006
Neural systems can be changed... but some systems are easier to change.

- **Brainstem**
- **Diencephalon**
- **Limbic**
- **Neocortex**

**Complexity** → **Plasticity & Ease of change**
Myth Busting

- I can separate my personal from my professional life.
"I can't stop thinking about all those available parking spaces back on West Eighty-fifth Street."
“I used to believe the world was basically fair and that people were basically good. Now I think fate is fickle and I don’t trust anyone.”
“After a time I just cried at everything. I felt as though I had no skin. I cried at the radio, television, commercials, and the newspaper and anything I read.”
“Since I started this job my wife has said that I have changed. She says I have become cold hearted. I know I have changed, Comes with the job.”
“Enemies, yes, but doesn’t your moat also keep out love?”
“Numb! Numb! It has been a tragic few days. Came upon the worse abuse situation in my time in child welfare. Tiny baby, bruised badly and burned. How could anyone do such a thing to a child. I felt sick last night. My body aches. Don’t feel like doing anything. Not wanting to feel anything either.
• Want to close my eyes, shut my ears, put a wall around ME! Want to distance myself from the world. Bought a bottle of wine. Thought maybe I could forget the last few days. I know it is an ARTIFICIAL escape. Won’t work. Never does. Only a way to temporarily escape from this ugly world.”
• Emphatic engagement makes us vulnerable and to intense and at times overwhelming feelings and disrupt beliefs of professionals
To Name it is To Tame It!
(Siegel, 2010)
Reactionary?  Critical?
“I bark at everything. Can’t go wrong that way.”
Overwhelmed? Exhausted?
“No, not there, please. That’s where I’m going to put my head.”
Hopeless?  Negative?
“And the dim fluorescent lighting is meant to emphasize the general absence of hope.”
Angry? Intolerant?
“No, Thursday’s out. How about never—is never good for you?”
Feeling Used? Taken Advantage Of?
"It's always 'Sit,' 'Stay,' 'Heel'—never 'Think,' 'Innovate,' 'Be yourself.'"
Skeptical?
morning back East.

“But she’ll come down eventually, and she’ll come down hard.”
Get Tired of the Demands?
"Listen, pal, they’re all emergencies."
Organizational Stress

• “Complex interaction between traumatized children, stressed staff, pressured school districts, and oppressive social and economic environments.” (Bloom, 2005)
Parallel Process

• “Our educational systems frequently recapitulate the very experiences that have proven to be so toxic for the children we are suppose to educate.” (Bloom, 2005)

• How does this happen?
“Can’t we just dye the smoke green?”
which elements to address, when, and how.

“I don't mind the whip. It's the cubicles I find demoralizing.”
Agency Staff Challenges

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Organizational Stress
Burnout

“State of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by exposure to chronic stress in the workplace. Depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment”

” (Regehr, Hemsworth, Leslie, Howe, & Chau, 2004)
Burnout

- “depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment”

- “feel overwhelmed by the emotional demands imposed by other people.” (Maslack, 1982)
How does burnout look at school for teachers and staff?
It is the shared responsibility of staff and administrators to become “sensitive” to the ways in which past and present overwhelming experiences impact individual performance, leadership styles, and group performance (Bloom, 2006).
"Eventually, I'd like to see you able to put yourself back together."
INTENTIONALITY
“If you are not taking risks and trying new things in the workplace you are not growing.” (Frost, 2007)
“My thought is that if those who work with traumatized children and families don’t have a plan on how to deal with their secondary trauma then they can’t do the work, because they can’t process what is happening to them personally” (Boyland, 2010).
Work Force Resiliency

- Collaboration
- Compassion
- Mastery Efficacy
- Hopefulness
- Office Culture Plan
Building Resiliency Collaborative Alliance

- “We are in this together!”
- “We are not our role but human beings.”
  - The organizational culture significantly affects the “collaborative alliance” in the school
  - Recognition that we all are engaged in a similar process of managing pain and navigating educational demands
  - The tap system
“Contact between people stimulates two important neurotransmitters, dopamine which enhances attention and pleasure and serotonin which reduces fear and worry. When people are in pain connecting with another can physiologically reduce fear and worry and help them function effectively again” (Hallowell, 1999).
How do your experiences with your colleagues increase or decrease your relatedness with others?

What helps? What hinders?
Building Resiliency: Mastery/Efficacy

- Competency derives from maintaining my compassion and doing what I need to do regardless of the outcomes
- Ability to regulate negative emotion when I am upset
- To recognize what can be controlled and what cannot
- Belief that providing optimum opportunities is the goal no matter what the outcome
FLINT TEEN BEATS THE ODDS IN GOLDEN MEDAL PERFORMANCE

LONDON — She has a boxer’s story: a troubled childhood, a brother in prison, a father who took up the sport to stay out of trouble, yet couldn’t watch her fight at the Olympics because of a criminal record of his own.

Clareessa Shields walked into the gym around the corner from her house in Flint, six short years ago, trying to cope with more heartache than an 11-year-old should. As she stood in the corridor of an arena half-a-world away, beads of sweat glistened between her braids, her smile every bit as bright as the gold medal dangling from her neck. The words poured out in torrents.

“I haven’t been home a lot. I know I must have a lot of publicity. I might go in history books,” she began.

“People are going to look at me as an inspiration. I’ll be able to help my family out. And then I got a gold medal I can wear every day.”

“Probably the first year,” she replied, pinching it between her fingers to be certain it was still there. “You know, there might be some days where I don’t want it to disappear from me. I worked too hard. I really worked too hard for this medal.”

Shields paused, trying to catch her breath.

“I can’t even explain the pain that I had went through, all the people that I had to deal with and just life — period. There were people who were telling me I couldn’t do this. And whenever somebody doubted me, it always makes me push harder. So thank you ... all the people that took the time to believe in me.”
What are the ways you experience efficacy and control within my agency?
Building Resilience
Fueling Hopefulness

- Recognition that negativity is the norm and default mode so I can be aware of what I am doing
- Moving from trying to control outcomes to providing opportunities for change
- Believing that kids are doing the best they can
- Acknowledging and learning from failure rather than blaming
- The little things I do may mean something important to children and families in the future despite what is happening in the present
- Reminding myself of past successes
Building Workforce Resiliency in your office

• How are we going to build collaboration?

• How are we going to build experiences of mastery and efficacy?

• How are we going to fuel hopefulness?
Name three positive experiences within your school?

How often do you focus on these positives rather than the negatives?
Building Resiliency: Compassion

• Embrace my own helplessness without blaming myself or others.

• Recognizing and appreciating my own limitations.

If I cannot provide compassion to myself can I really give it to others?
Changing the brain handout
Secondary traumatic stress not only causes distress but can create opportunities for growth and positive change (Tedeschi, Park, Calhoun, 1998).

- Perception of self
- Changes in relational capacity
- Changes in philosophy of life
Positive Outcomes

• Increased appreciation for social supports
• Higher self efficacy
• Social and personal resources
• Development of new coping skills
• Increased self knowledge (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996)
3 Resiliency Questions

• What are you feeling?

• What is your goal for the day?

• Who do you need to help you reach your goal?
Future Goals

• What is one goal for beginning to identify and address secondary trauma with staff?

• Create a plan to meet that goal.

• Who will I need to assist me with this plan?

• What are potential barriers to meeting this plan?
• James.henry@wmich.edu
• Connie.black-pond@wmich.edu